



Holy Ascension

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha, He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to His disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven"(Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred disciples, they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted that the Mount of Olives is a Sabbath's day journey from Jerusalem, that is, the distance a Jew was permitted to walk on the day of the Sabbath. Ecumenius writes, " A Sabbath day's journey is one mile in length, as Clement says in his fifth *Stromatis*; it is two thousand cubits, as the *Interpretation of the Acts* states." They draw this conclusion from the fact that, while they were in the wilderness, the Israelites of old kept this distance from the Holy Tabernacle, whither they walked on the Sabbath Day to worship God.

Dismissal Hymn. Fourth Tone

THOU hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit; and they were assured by the blessing that Thou art the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

Kontakion. Plagal of Second Tone

WHEN Thou hadst fulfilled Thy dispensation for our sakes, uniting things on earth with the Heavens, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, departing not hence, but remaining inseparable from us and crying unto them that love Thee: I am with you, and no one can be against you.

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“YE MEN OF GALILEE, WHY STAND YE GAZING UP INTO HEAVEN?
THIS SAME JESUS, WHO IS TAKEN UP FROM YOU INTO HEAVEN,
SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO INTO
HEAVEN”(Acts 1:11).

Selected Hymns from
THE MENAION

OIKOS

LEAVING the things of earth upon the earth and surrendering to the earth things of ashes, come, let us come to our senses and raise our eyes and thoughts on high; let us, O mortals, turn our gaze together with our senses up unto the heavenly gates. Let us consider ourselves present at the Mount of Olives, and gaze intently at the Redeemer Who is riding upon a cloud; for the Lord hath hastened up from there into the Heavens. And there the bountiful Giver of Gifts distributed gifts unto His Apostles, calling to them as a Father, and strengthening them; He guided them like sons and said unto them: I am not separated from you; I am with you and no one can be against you.

*The Synaxarion of the Menaion,
Then the following:*

On this day, the Thursday of the sixth week of Pascha, we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Verses

Thou didst sit at the right hand of the Father, O Word,
Granting unto Thine initiates a most steadfast faith.

O Christ our God, Who didst ascend in glory, have mercy on us. Amen.

**SATURDAY OF THE SIXTH WEEK
MATINS**

Glory; both now. *Grave Tone*

UNTO the Mount of Olives didst Thou come, Who hast mercy on the race of men. And a cloud took Thee up out of the sight of Thy disciples, who, on one hand, trembled because of that which they beheld, and, on the other hand, rejoiced at their expectation of the Holy Spirit, wherein do Thou make us steadfast, O Saviour, and have mercy on us.

